



Fire Sprinkler Requirements for Additions to Existing, Non-Sprinklered Dwellings

TECHNICAL BULLETIN

RESD-3-1

City of San Diego
Development Services Department

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The purpose of this Technical Bulletin is to establish the City of San Diego's interpretation for requiring fire sprinkler systems in additions and alterations to existing one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses that do not have an existing fire sprinkler system installed. For the purpose of this Technical Bulletin, dwelling units are defined in the California Residential Code (CRC) and the floor area of the unit must include all habitable spaces and all non-habitable spaces such as garages and storage areas.

All new dwelling units are required by CRC Section R313 to be provided with fire sprinkler protection unless exempted in Section II below.

I. SPRINKLER PROTECTION FOR EXISTING DWELLING UNITS

Installation of a fire sprinkler system in existing dwelling units shall be required for the following cases:

A. New Dwelling Unit

When a new, dwelling unit (detached or attached) is added on the same lot with an existing dwelling unit, fire sprinkler protection must be provided only for the new dwelling unit.

B. Existing Dwelling Unit Additions

When the floor area of an existing dwelling unit is increased, a fire sprinkler system shall be installed throughout the entire dwelling (existing areas and new addition areas) when both of the conditions occur:

1. The total floor area of the dwelling, (existing plus the new addition), is greater than 3,600 sq. ft. and
2. The floor area of the new addition exceeds 50% of the floor area of the existing dwelling.

Documents referenced in this Information Bulletin

- California Residential Code, ([CRC](#))
- Land Development Code, ([LDC](#))

II. EXCEPTIONS TO SPRINKLER PROTECTION

Installation of a fire sprinkler system shall not be required for the following cases:

A. Existing Dwelling Unit Alterations

When an existing dwelling unit is altered to create two separate dwelling units with a combined floor area that is the same floor area of the original dwelling unit.

B. New Guest Quarters

New guest quarters, as defined in LDC Section §141.0306, are not considered new dwelling units. Therefore, a guest quarter added to an existing dwelling unit, either attached or detached.

C. New Companion Units/Junior Units

New companion units or junior units, as defined in the LDC Section §141.0302 (defined in 2016 California Senate Bill 1069, as accessory dwelling units), that are 1,200 square feet or less in area when located on the same lot as an existing, non-sprinklered dwelling unit.